

ABSTRACT: Foundations to Actions: Extending Innovations in Digital Libraries in Partnership with NDSR Learners

The Biodiversity Heritage Library (BHL), led by the Ernst Mayr Library of the Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard University (MCZ), proposes to host a National Digital Stewardship Residency (NDSR) cohort for the 2016-2017 year. The formal partners are the Field Museum of Natural History (FMNH), Chicago Botanic Garden (CBG), Missouri Botanical Garden (MOBOT), Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County (NHM) and the Smithsonian Institution (SI). The BHL NDSR cohort would support five geographically distributed residents, graduates of LIS or related master's programs, in a collaborative project to improve tools, curation and content stewardship of a key digital life sciences library: BHL. Outcomes will include a best practices guidelines document for digital libraries incorporating transcriptions, image searching, collection analysis techniques and better connections to museums, archives and other relevant databases. Better functionality for the BHL, based on user needs, will feed into other data systems and provide enhancements for BHL biodiversity and library partners such as such as the Encyclopedia of Life (EOL), Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF), Digital Public Library of America (DPLA), and Europeana. This project will be completed in 2 years from June 1, 2016 to May 31, 2018, with the residents at the host institutions for 12 months Jan. 1, 2017 - December 31, 2017.

Although the focus of BHL is on Life Sciences, there are connections to history, art and culture. For instance, all of the grant participants are associated with cultural heritage museums that incorporate more than biodiversity into their exhibits, research and education activities. This series of resident projects is an opportunity to develop a bridge to connect museum and library/archives collections.

Each host institution will provide mentorship to a resident for a specific project designed to improve the functionality of BHL and identify how tools and processes may be transferred to or from other digital library and museum environments. The Chicago partners' resident will address content and gap analysis, reviewing the domain of literature underpinning the field of biodiversity, the amount of that literature in the public domain, and explore methodologies to scope and visualize digital collections. The MCZ resident will build on work done with MOBOT to develop methodologies and propose tools for verification and integration of crowdsourced data corrections. The MOBOT resident will explore user interface modifications to the BHL portal to enable image searching, browsing and display. The NHM resident will consult with BHL partners such as DPLA and Europeana to determine how BHL data works in these large scale digital libraries and categorize high value tools and services. Finally, the SI resident will work with the BHL Secretariat to determine additional digital library needs and services that will provide increased value to a broader set of BHL users.